

RESEARCH ARTICLE

First-Year College Students' Emotional Intelligence and Help-Seeking Behaviours as Correlates of their Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was examining the correlations of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour on students' academic achievement in Woldia College of Teacher Education (WCTE), Woldia, Ethiopia. The participants were 283 first-year regular diploma students of the college in the academic year of 2015/2016. The study employed a quantitative approach which followed correlation design involving four instruments to collect data for the study: Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, Academic Help-Seeking Behaviour Questionnaire, Psychological Help-Seeking Behaviour Questionnaire, and Cumulative Grade Point Average.

To answer the research questions raised in the study, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and Pearson product-moment analysis, as well as inferential statistics such as independent sample t-test, multiple regression tests, and beta coefficients were conducted. The Pearson correlation analysis reported the following findings: (1) emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and, psychological help-seeking behaviour had a significant positive correlation with students' academic achievement; (2) emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour had a positive but not significant correlation with each other; (3) however, emotional intelligence was negatively but not significantly correlated with psychological help-seeking behaviour.

The multiple regression analysis showed that there was a significant contribution of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour to the total variance of academic achievement. The beta coefficients revealed that the independent contributions of independent variables of the study to the total variance of academic achievement were found to be emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour, respectively. The independent sample t-test reported that there were significant gender differences in students' emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour. The gender differences in academic help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement were not statistically significant. Finally, it was recommended that parents, instructors, counsellors, and administrative bodies should work on promoting students' emotional intelligence and developing students' help-seeking behaviours (academic and psychological help-seeking behaviours) to enhance academic achievement of students in WCTE.

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Keywords

academic achievement; academic help-seeking behaviour; emotional intelligence; psychological help-seeking behaviour

Background of the Study

College-level academic activities are different in many ways from the students' high school experiences. For instance, according to Bohanan (2008), a typical course load in high school includes more than 30 hours of classroom instruction, but 12 to 15 hours is considered a full load in college. As Bohanan points out, the reason for this is that college courses typically require two to three hours of preparation for each hour spent in the classroom. Students are expected to come to class having already studied the material, so that more information can be covered each semester than is possible in a typical high school setting. In high school, academic requirements are not as demanding and most assignments are completed at school or within short periods of time at home, whereas in college, academics are more demanding and more difficult. Most classes require several hours of homework each week in order to complete assignments. In addition, effective college-level study skills are critical to success.

Focusing specifically on first-year students' academic, social and emotional problems, a preliminary survey conducted at the University of Zambia indicated the presence of a large number and a wide variety of problems that are sufficiently potent, general and persistent to be a cause of concern to university authorities (Wilson, 1984, cited in Kabtamu, 2009). A similar study conducted in two universities of Thailand also showed that the most severe adjustment problem of first-year students was related to adjustment to college work (Barnacle & Cheunarrom, 2000, cited in Kabtamu, 2009). The studies further disclosed that adjustment to college was strongly associated with the academic achievement (AA) of the students.

There seems to be general agreement amongst scholars that students' academic achievement depends on several interlocking factors (Gifford et al., 2006). Socio-demographic factors (such as age, income and gender), psychological factors (e.g. motivation, stress and study strategies) and other factors like study hours and understanding the language of instruction are amongst the factors that could play substantial roles in students' academic success.

Despite other numerous types of variables that could affect students' academic achievement at different levels of schooling, the current study examined the correlates of emotional intelligence (EI) and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour [AHSB] and psychological help-seeking behaviour [PHSB]) on students' academic achievement at college level.

The concept of emotional intelligence is a very interesting topic of psychological research, especially in regard to how it affects the workforce and social functioning of citizens in the process of helping needy people and delivering public services (Gregg, Grout, Ratcliffe, Smith & Windmeijer, 2008, cited in Gemechu, 2014). Moreover,

Goleman (1998) referred to emotional intelligence as the ability to be aware of one's emotions and managing those emotions in one's daily interactions with people, to establish emotional connections. In addition, Bhadouria (2013, p. 8) defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate amongst them and to use this information to guide ones thinking and actions".

Regarding college students, research conducted by Mestre et al. (2006) showed that college students who have high emotional intelligence tended to perform better in terms of academic achievement. In line with this, researchers, for instance Bhadouria (2013), found out that the correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, and teaching emotional and social skills at school, not only positively influence academic achievement during the year when these were taught but also have an impact on long-term achievement. On the other hand, Gemechu (2014), after conducting a study, reported a positive but not statistically significant correlation between the students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement of $r(213) = 0.01, p = 0.87$.

Diener and Dweck (1978) described help-seeking behaviour that is directed towards finding the solution to a problem as promoting extended task involvement. Academic help-seeking is viewed as an important instrumental (also known as autonomous, adaptive, or strategic), self-regulatory behavioural strategy that successful learners use to help achieve their academic goals (Karabenick, 2004; Karabenick & Shim, 2005). With regard to the urges of psychological help-seeking, Sarson and Sarson (2002) as cited in Kabtamu (2009) wrote that some people seek professional help when they are dissatisfied with themselves, or because of concern expressed by family members, friends or co-workers.

There are arguments in the research studies concerning gender differences in emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) and academic achievement amongst male and female students. Regarding gender difference in emotional intelligence Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001) found that emotional intelligence was higher for females than for males. Similarly, Charbonneau and Nicol (2002) in their study revealed that the women scored somewhat but not significantly higher than the men on emotional intelligence.

By contrast, Mishra and Ranjan (2008) studied whether the gender difference affects the emotional intelligence of adolescents and the results showed that adolescent males and females differ significantly on emotional intelligence, with the males found to be significantly higher on emotional intelligence than the females.

While there is limited research on gender difference in academic help-seeking behaviour, the results from Holt's (2014) study revealed that female students reported more positive attitudes towards seeking academic help than their male counterparts. However, Holt did not suggest why there are gender differences in academic help-seeking behaviour. This finding led to the proposition that the gender differences presented in Nam et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis on students' attitudes towards seeking psychological help also pertain to students' attitudes towards seeking academic help. As described by Addis

and Mahalik (2003), males' reluctance to seek help is motivated by a complex interaction of their socialisation, the social construction of masculinity, and the meaning of giving and receiving help in a particular situation. However, the limited research in the extant literature does not offer empirically supported explanations for this gender difference in academic help-seeking. Contrary to Holt's (2014) finding, Sager (2015) reported no gender differences in attitudes about seeking academic help.

Many studies reported gender differences in psychological help-seeking behaviour, showing that females report more positive attitudes about seeking psychological help than their male counterparts (Holt, 2014; Elhai, Schweinle & Anderson, 2008; Larose & Bernier, 2001; Lopez et al., 1998). Nam et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on gender differences in attitudes towards seeking psychological help. In their studies of college students, their main finding was that female college students exhibit more favourable attitudes about psychological help-seeking.

Abdu-Raheem (2012) stated that gender differences and academic achievement amongst students in schools is one of the most topical issues in the current debate all over the world. According to Abdu-Raheem, a major area of concern has been the effects of gender differences on academic achievement of students. In Ethiopian-context research conducted by Atsede (1991), cited in Ayele (2012), it is contended that cultural systems of Ethiopia, particularly gendered socialisation (i.e. females' marginalisation), prevent them from being as successful as males. In fact, over the years, there has been a growing awareness of the role of females at home, in schools and community in general. However, worries have equally been expressed about the role of females in the political, social, cultural, psychological, economic, spiritual, scientific and technological development of the nations. In this regard, Tadesse (2011), in his study, reported that there was a statistically significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students. However, other researchers (for instance, Ewumi, 2012) reported that there were no significant gender differences in students' academic achievement.

To summarise, the studies mentioned above are preliminaries in the Ethiopian context, suggesting that there is a knowledge gap in the literature with respect to the correlates of emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) with students' academic achievement and gender differences in these variables. Essentially, therefore, it was plausible for the current researcher to see the correlates of students' emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) with their academic achievement in Woldia College of Teachers Education (WCTE) first-year regular diploma students. The college is one of the ten government teacher education colleges of Amhara region, North East Ethiopia.

Statement of the Problem

According to Kabtamu (2011), the first year of college life is usually acknowledged as a stressful time for social and academic adjustment. During this period, first-year students face

many social challenges (e.g. moving away from their primary support systems – parents) and intellectual challenges (e.g. more demanding course work or heavy work load). To this end, some local studies have revealed that Ethiopian collegians, particularly the freshmen, encounter enormous psychological and social hazards that require professional help in addition to help rendered by friends and relatives (Abdu, 2003; Tsige, 2001).

However, it is a common observation that most college students in our country tend to be uncomfortable about disclosing themselves to professional help providers, especially when they are expected to share intimate personal feelings and emotions with a new advisor or counsellor. Moreover, as reported in Tadesse (2011), it was indicated that students' academic achievement can be largely associated with many variables, but the current study focused on examining the correlations of three variables: emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour on students' academic achievement in WCTE. With this in mind, the following rationales initiated the current researcher to conduct this study.

Primarily, since the researcher is an instructor and guidance and counselling officer of the WCTE, his own experience of teaching the students (mainly first-year students) revealed the many psychosocial problems that they face (for instance, their academic, emotional and psychological problems), and this urged him to conduct this type of study in the college. In WCTE, students' CGPA is frequently daunting from year to year. In this case, the yearly reports of students' academic achievement scores recorded by the registrar's office of the college show this academic trend. In this regard, in view of the social, academic and personal challenges that students are supposed to adjust to, the researcher believed that it would be worthwhile to assess the students' emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviours.

Second, the controversies and uncertainties regarding the relationship between EI, AHSB, PHSB and academic achievement, the predictive power of EI, AHSB, PHSB on students' academic achievement, and gender differences amongst these variables raised above, evoke additional interest. So the researcher wanted to arrive at a conclusion through conducting his own research.

Finally, in the college, while there are different types of research studies conducted on different issues, the researcher did not come across such a study about examining the correlates of students' emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) with students' academic achievement, and he finally reached a conclusion that there is a scarcity of research resources in the area emphasised. Therefore, the current study will give an overview of the correlates of students' emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviour dimensions (academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) with their academic achievement in this level of education. Bearing in mind the above justifications, the study is designed to find answers to the following three major research questions:

1. Are there relationships amongst emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour, and academic achievement?
2. Which independent variable(s) is (are) the strong predictor(s) of academic achievement?
3. Are there statistically significant gender differences in students' emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement?

Methods

Design of the study

As mentioned earlier, this research project aimed at investigating the correlates of first-year college students' emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour with their academic achievement. To achieve its purpose, the research followed a quantitative approach. This research approach allowed the researcher to numerically analyse the relationships amongst the dependent and independent variables in the study. The students' emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour were the independent variables whose changes presume to influence the dependent variable (academic achievement). Thus, the study came under the umbrella of correlational research design.

Population, sample and sampling techniques of the study

The population of this study were first-year regular diploma trainees of Woldia College of Teacher Education ($N=972$, $M=615$ and $F=357$) in the 2015/2016 academic year. From this population, 179 male and 104 female (total = 283) first-year regular diploma students were selected as source of information using the sampling determination formula of Yamane (1967, p. 886) cited in Israel (2009), i.e.:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision. Since the study focused on first-year students, only first-year students were selected through employing purposive sampling. To do so, stratified random sampling as well as probability proportional to size techniques was used. To make the sample size proportional across departments and gender, their stream (department) and gender were considered as two strata. The following table depicts samples selected in the above-mentioned sampling techniques.

Table 1: Summary of the sample size by stream and gender

Stream (Department)	Population			Sample		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
New modality	562	262	824	164	76	240
Special needs	53	16	69	15	5	20
Kindergarten (KG)	0	79	79	0	23	23
Total	615	357	972	179	104	283

Source: WCTE Registrar's office

Data gathering instruments

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, four kinds of instruments – emotional intelligence questionnaire, academic help-seeking behaviour questionnaire, psychological help-seeking behaviour questionnaire, and the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of WCTE first-year regular diploma students of 2015/2016 academic year of first semester – were used to gather the necessary data from students.

Questionnaires

A total of three types of questionnaires were developed and administered to collect data on learners' emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour. The scales were tested for their reliability. The questionnaire consisted of four major parts. In the first part, the respondents were requested to supply general demographic information. The second part consisted of the emotional intelligence questionnaire, the third part consisted of the academic help-seeking behaviour questionnaire, and the fourth part consisted of the psychological help-seeking behaviour items. To lessen the communication or language barrier of the respondents, all the questionnaire items in this study were translated into their mother tongue with the help of two teacher educators of WCTE qualified in English Language. In addition, with the recommendation of two psychology teacher educators some ambiguous items were re-defined so as to provide more clarity. For all of the three scales (emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour) all of the items were Likert-scaled on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A. Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

Students' level of emotional intelligence was measured by using 33 items adopted from a previous study (Gemechu, 2014) and adding four additional items from different literature sources. The questionnaire consisted of 37 items.

B. Academic Help-Seeking Behaviour Questionnaire

The academic help-seeking behaviour questionnaire used to measure the level of students' academic help-seeking behaviour scale was developed by Julia C. Sager (2015). The questionnaire consisted of 14 items.

C. Psychological Help-Seeking Behaviour Questionnaire

Attitudes towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale – Short Form (ATSPPHS-SF): This is a ten-item measure adapted from the original Attitudes towards Seeking Professional Help Scale (Fischer & Farina, 1995). It is the most widely used measure of individuals' attitudes towards seeking psychological help (Elhai, Schweinle & Anderson, 2008). Higher scores on this measure indicate a more positive attitude about treatment, and are associated with greater intentions to seek psychological help.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)

The cumulative GPA of first-year regular diploma students of the 2015/2016 academic year first semester (in all courses) for each student was collected from the registrar's office of Woldia College of Teacher Education to measure academic achievement score.

Data gathering procedures

Pilot study

Before administration of the questionnaires, the college dean's consent was required in giving access and permission to conduct a study in the college and to allow students to participate in the study. The researcher asked the consent through describing the purpose of the study and the ethical guidelines to be considered in the study. The informed consent was provided through discussion. The researcher administered the questionnaires (pilot test) to 30 students (15 males and 15 females) who were not part of the study, and calculated item total correlations. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability (or consistency) was used to measure internal consistency of the scales. The responses were coded and the reliabilities of the three questionnaires were calculated. Accordingly, reliabilities of Cronbach's alpha 0.856, 0.882 and 0.873 for emotional intelligence (comprising 37 items), academic help-seeking behaviour (comprising 14 items) and psychological help-seeking behaviour (comprising 10 items) respectively were obtained. The reliability coefficients indicated that the items were highly reliable. George and Mallery (2003) suggested the following rules for evaluating alpha coefficients: > 0.9 – excellent; > 0.8 – good; > 0.7 – acceptable; > 0.6 questionable; > 0.5 – poor; < 0.5 – unacceptable. The face validity of the scales was tested by psychology teacher educators in the Department of Education of WCTE. After the reliability score, further modifications were made to make the items clear and understandable.

The main data gathering process

After the questionnaires were ready for administration, the researcher followed the following data-collection procedures. The questionnaires were administered in students' respective regular class periods by the researcher himself and four other instructors of the college. After the purposes of the research were clarified and informed consent was gained from respondents, the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire without a time limit. Following this, the questionnaire booklets (emotional intelligence questionnaire,

academic help-seeking behaviour questionnaire and psychological help-seeking behaviour questionnaire) were handed out to the respondents. Respondents were asked not to discuss the items as the response of one could influence another. Explanation and examples as to how students should respond to the questionnaire were given by the researcher. Instructions and further explanations were given to the effect that first they needed to fill out the demographic questionnaire which requests them to write their gender, section, and roll number (which was used to collect their academic achievement scores).

After completing the demographic questionnaire, the participants were told to start completing the questionnaire through reading the instructions. Adequate time was provided for the participants to fill out the questionnaires. In order for the students not to provide invalid answers to the questionnaire items, they were allowed to raise any question or doubt while filling out the data. Administration of the final version of the questionnaires took place during March 2016. When the students had finished, all the booklets were collected by the researcher's assistants and the researcher himself. The researcher then thanked the respondents and the assistants for their cooperation. Finally, all the data was coded once the coding process was completed and organized for analysis.

In addition, regarding the data-collection process through analyzing students' achievement scores (to measure their academic achievement), the researcher used the following procedure:

1. First, the researcher informed the registrar officer of the college of the purposes of reviewing students' achievement scores.
2. Students' average achievement scores (CGPA) of all courses taken in first semester were collected by using their roll number.
3. Finally, their CGPAs were received from the registrar.

Data analysis techniques

The statistical analysis was carried out based on the basic research questions that the study aimed to answer. As it was explained in the previous sections, this research is quantitative. The data were analysed using different statistical tools. So, in this study, to see the general feature of the data on each variable, descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation of each variable were calculated.

After the data-gathering and coding process, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-version 20), amongst the various computational techniques for analysis. Three statistical techniques were employed. Correlation (Pearson's product-moment correlation) was used to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour (predictor variables) on the one hand, and the criterion variable (academic achievement) on the other and between the independent variables. Thus, whether these predictor variables (emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour) predict students' academic achievement was examined. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine how well emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and

psychological help-seeking behaviour (predictive variables) predict students' academic achievement (criterion variable). Lastly, *t*-test (independent sample *t*-test) was used to see if there existed any significant gender differences in the variables of the study. The students' first semester CGPA was used to represent their academic achievement.

Ethical considerations

Prior to administering the questionnaire, the objectives of the study were clearly explained to the participants and oral informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the execution of the study

Operational definitions

Emotional intelligence: refers to the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions to discriminate amongst them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions as measured by an emotional intelligence scale.

Academic help-seeking behaviour: refers to cognitively-oriented achievement behaviour involving the search for the employment of a strategy to obtain academic success.

Psychological help-seeking behaviour: refers to emotion-oriented counselling services requested by students and delivered by the guidance counsellor.

Academic achievement: refers to WCTE first-year regular diploma students' first semester CGPA scores in all courses taken in the 2015/2016 academic year.

Results

Pearson product-moment correlation

As denoted in the statement of the problem, one of the objectives of this study was to examine the relation between emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour, and academic achievement of college students, especially first-year regular diploma students at the WCTE. To do this, the Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted and the results are indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The correlation between emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour, and academic achievement

Variables	Mean	SD	Pearson correlation coefficients			
			1	2	3	4
1. EI	3.1731	0.3426	1			
2. AHSB	3.4643	0.5623	0.153	1		
3. PHSB	2.9871	0.4742	-0.089	0.252**	1	
4. AA	2.5713	0.3317	0.483**	0.409**	0.226*	1

N = 283 {Codes were 1 = Male, 2 = Female}; * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level;
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

As indicated in Table 2 above, the results of Pearson correlation showed that there was a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, $r(283) = 0.483^{**}$, $p < 0.01$. Similarly, academic help-seeking behaviour had a significant positive correlation with academic achievement, $r(283) = 0.409^{**}$, $p < 0.01$. In addition, academic help-seeking behaviour had a significant correlation with psychological help-seeking behaviour, $r(283) = 0.252^{**}$, $p < 0.01$. Furthermore, there was a positive significant correlation between psychological help-seeking behaviour and students' academic achievement, $r(283) = 0.226^*$, $p < 0.05$. The correlation between emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour was positive but not statistically significant, $r(283) = 0.153$, $p > 0.05$. However, there exists a negative but not statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour, $r(283) = 0.089$, $p > 0.05$.

Multiple regression analysis

The second purpose of this study was to examine how well independent variables predict the dependent variable. Hence, multiple regression analysis for all variables was computed. Regression analyses typically follow significant correlations and are used to determine the extent to which academic achievement (dependent variable) can be predicted from emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour (independent variables). The utility of regression lies in its future use.

The following table presents the result of the multiple regression analysis in which the independent variables were identified in the order of their importance in predicting students' academic achievement.

Table 3: Multiple regression statistics of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour on academic achievement

Variables	β	Std. Error	β	T	P	R	R^2
1. EI	0.441	0.071	0.456	6.223	0.000	0.6199 ^a	0.383
2. AHSB	0.171	0.044	0.290	3.852	0.000		
3. PHSB	0.136	0.052	0.194	2.592	0.011		

The regression analysis results indicated that there was a significant contribution of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour to academic achievement ($R^2 = 0.383$, $F = 24.789$, $P < 0.05$).

Furthermore, the direct effects of the independent variables on academic achievement were determined using beta coefficients. The effects on academic achievement of emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.456$, $t = 6.223$, $P < 0.05$), academic help-seeking behaviour ($\beta = 0.290$, $t = 3.852$, $P < 0.05$) and psychological help-seeking behaviour ($\beta = 0.194$, $t = 2.592$, $P < 0.05$) were statistically significant.

The independent contribution of emotional intelligence to the total variance in academic achievement was found to be 22.0248%, which was 57.4634% of the total R^2 (i.e. 0.383). The independent contribution of academic help-seeking behaviour to the

total variance of academic achievement was found to be 11.861%, which was 30.9457% of the total R^2 (0.383). This means the composite contribution of emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour to the variance of academic achievement was 88.4091%. The remaining 4.4426% contribution of the total R^2 , which was 11.5908% of the total R^2 , was contributed by psychological help-seeking behaviour,

Independent sample *t*-test

The third purpose of this study was to examine whether there is a statistically significant gender difference of the variables in the study. To do this, independent sample *t*-test was conducted and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Independent sample *t*-test

Variables	Male (N = 179)		Female (N = 104)		T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
EI	3.2562	0.31947	2.9341	0.29479	5.007#	282	0.000
AHSB	3.5481	0.61163	3.4532	0.27500	2.899	282	0.104
PHSB	2.8848	0.50360	3.2812	0.16547	-4.362#	282	0.000
AA	2.6007	0.33984	2.5419	0.30280	1.308	282	0.193
# $P < 0.01$							

Results of *t*-test analysis in Table 4 above revealed that there were significant gender differences in emotional intelligence, $t(282) = 5.007, p < 0.05$, and psychological help-seeking behaviour, $t(282) = -4.362, p < 0.05$. The results showed that male students scored statistically higher mean emotional intelligence scores. On the other hand, female students showed more psychological help-seeking behaviour than their male counterparts. However, significant gender differences were not found on academic help-seeking behaviour, $t(282) = 2.899, p > 0.05, ns$ and academic achievement, $t(282) = 1.308, p > 0.05, ns$.

Discussion

The present study examined the correlates of emotional intelligence, AHSB, and PHSB, on academic achievement. The discussion was first about the results obtained with regard to the relationship of EI, AHSB, and PHSB with academic achievement. Second, regression analyses of the influences of EI, AHSB, and PHSB (predictive variables) on academic achievement (criterion variable) were conducted. Finally, gender differences in EI, AHSB, PHSB and academic achievement were dealt with.

Intercorrelations amongst variables

Previous research has shown conflicting information about the relationship between emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 2 of this study clearly shows that the relationships between students'

academic achievement (dependent variable) and emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour (the independent variables) were statistically significant.

The results of this study indicated that emotional intelligence had a significant and positive correlation with the students' academic achievement. This indicates that as students' emotional intelligence increases, their academic achievement increases and vice versa. These findings are similar to the findings of many previous international studies, for instance, Tamannaifar et al. (2010) and Mestre et al. (2006). In addition, in line with the current study, researchers such as Yahaya et al. (2011) and Mulugeta (2011) found that emotional intelligence significantly and positively related to students' academic achievement.

Contrary to the present findings, studies conducted by Barchard (2003); Bracket and Salovey (2006); Marquez et al. (2006); Sunbul and Alsan (2007); Newsome, Day and Catano (2000) cited in Mulugeta (2011) reported findings that revealed very weak and non-significant correlation between emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement indicated that, as students' emotional intelligence grows, it is likely that their academic achievement increases and vice versa. The Pearson correlation coefficient presented a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. In view of this, it is absolutely essential for teacher education colleges to enhance their students' emotional intelligence, and by so doing, improve the academic achievements of their students. For instance, teachers can enhance students' emotional intelligence by: embedding social and emotional learning into their teaching practices, encouraging students to develop and share opinions, engaging students in problem-solving, etc.

Furthermore, the result of this study shows that students' academic help-seeking behaviour has a significant and positive correlation to students' academic achievement. This shows that students who have good academic help-seeking behaviour also show good academic achievement. To this end, teachers can improve students' academic help-seeking behaviour by restructuring the learning environment to one that does not emphasise competition and grades, but focuses more on understanding. In addition, trying to be more interactive and engaging may help to increase students' academic help-seeking behaviour and decrease ambivalence towards a topic or content area. In line with this, after conducting research on attribution analysis of help-seeking in academic settings Ames and Lau, (1982); Karbenic and Kanp (1991) cited in Kitsance and Chow (2007), concluded, "...when college students are confronted with poor performance, they engage in both achievement-related and help-seeking behaviour". In addition, the findings of the previous scholars and researchers (such as Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Ryan et al., 1998; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997) are in line with the result of this study. According to Karabenick and Knapp (1991), students who encounter academic difficulties are more likely to first engage in instrumental activities designed to help one improve his/her academic performance, followed by seeking help from informal sources (primarily from peers), seeking help from formal sources (instructors and support services), and lastly, lowering their aspirations and altering their goals.

Moreover, burgeoning research studies have investigated a significant positive relationship between academic help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement (for instance: Triandis, 1994; Volet & Karabenick, 2006; Newman, 1998). According to Volet and Karabenick (2006), help seeking is currently considered an important learning strategy that is linked to students' academic performance. According to Triandis (1994), cultural factors can influence whether and in what situations students seek help. Similarly, Volet and Karabenick noted that the more students are culturally different from their peers, the less likely they are to approach them for needed academic assistance. For this matter in classroom instruction it is important to understand the multidimensional nature of cultural diversity and inclusion and how this understanding can be used by teachers to more effectively develop varied instructional strategies that will allow them to teach with better cultural responsiveness.

Newman (1991) stated that help seeking in the classroom is a social transaction. Thus, teachers establish and students internalise patterns of classroom discourse, helping students both to accomplish difficult tasks and to learn that questioning is an invaluable academic strategy. In contrast, teachers who take on the role of experts are likely to support over-dependent executively expedient help seeking. At this point, teachers' feedback helps students learn the difference between adaptive and non-adaptive (i.e. expedient) help seeking. Encouraging students to go back to an incorrect problem and try to resolve it may convince them of the importance of determining whether they need future assistance. Additionally, it may be instrumental in students' coming to appreciate the function of questioning and help seeking in the ongoing process of self-monitoring and teaching (Newman, 1991).

In addition, the present study found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour. This, in other words, means emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour are significant/positively dependent on each other and students with good academic help-seeking behaviour are likely to have high emotional intelligence and vice versa. The result of this study also revealed that there is a negative and non-significant correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour. This indicates that, students who have high emotional intelligence seem less likely to be psychological help seekers and vice versa.

With regard to the relationship between psychological help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement, the findings of this study revealed a positive and significant correlation between students' psychological help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement, $r(283) = 0.226^*$, $p < 0.05$. The finding of this study is consistent with Goodwin (2008). The findings reported that there existed a significant positive relationship between psychological help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement. This means that when psychological help-seeking behaviour increases, academic achievement increases and if psychological help-seeking behaviour decreases, academic achievement falls.

The contributions of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour on students' academic achievement.

The multiple linear regression analysis results indicated that there were significant contributions of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour to students' academic achievement ($R^2=0.383$, $F=24.789$, $p<0.05$).

Furthermore, the beta coefficient analysis was conducted to see the direct effects of study variables on students' academic achievement. In the current study, the beta coefficient analysis showed that the multiple contributions of emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour were significant (i.e. the composite contribution of these variables was 38.3%). Amongst the total contribution of the three independent variables of the study, emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking variables made a great contribution (i.e. the composite contribution of these two variables was 88.4% to the total R^2 which was 38.3%). It is also indicated that emotional intelligence, which accounts for 22.02% of the total variance, was the strongest predictor of students' academic achievement. When the direct effects of the predictor variables on criterion variables are examined for the overall sample, in support of the literature, in this study emotional intelligence had a significant and positive direct effect on the achievement of students ($\beta=0.456$, $p<0.05$), indicating that emotionally highly intelligent students had higher academic achievement compared to their counterpart students who had lower emotional intelligence.

Researchers like Guil, Mestre and Gil-Olarte (2004) found that emotional intelligence was a strong predictor of academic achievement. According to them, when other variables were controlled, it was indicated that emotional intelligence contributed significantly to academic achievement. Similarly, Bhadouria (2013) stated that more than any other variable emotional intelligence was found to be a reliable predictor of academic achievement. Findings from this study are consistent with those of the above researchers. In line with this, other researchers (for instance, Chew, Zain & Hassan, 2013) also indicated that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of academic achievement.

Furthermore, in this study, academic help-seeking behaviour significantly and positively predicted academic achievement amongst WCTE first-year regular diploma students ($\beta=0.290$, $p<0.05$). Students who scored high on measures of academic help-seeking behaviour were more likely to score higher on academic achievement results than students who scored low, and vice versa. This finding was consistent with the findings of Ryan and Pintrich (1997) and Ryan, Pintrich and Midgley (2001).

In addition, in this study, psychological help-seeking behaviour was found to be a positive and significant predictor of academic achievement of WCTE first-year regular diploma students ($\beta=0.194$, $p<0.05$). Hence, students who scored high on measures of psychological help-seeking behaviour were more likely to score higher on academic achievement than students who scored low and vice versa. In line with this study, Goodwin (2008) reported that negative attitudes towards psychological help seeking correlated with lower GPAs.

Gender differences in emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, psychological help-seeking behaviour, and academic achievement

Previous research findings reported argumentative statements regarding gender differences in the emotional intelligence of students. For instance, Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001) stated that female students reported better emotional intelligence than male students. In line with this, Viswantha and Siva (2013) also reported that higher emotional intelligence and being female are positively associated with academic success.

Contrary to the above findings, in line with the present study, researchers, for instance, Mishra and Ranjan (2008) have studied whether the gender difference affects emotional intelligence of adolescents and the results showed that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly on emotional intelligence, and boys were found to be significantly higher on emotional intelligence than girls.

Regarding gender differences on students' academic help-seeking behaviour, researchers, for instance, Holt, (2014); Elhai, Schweinle and Anderson (2008); Larose and Bernier (2001), revealed that females report more positive attitudes about seeking academic help than their male counterparts. In the same vein, Holt's (2014) study revealed that female students reported more positive attitudes towards seeking academic help than their male counterparts. In connection with the findings of the assumption that high performance of female participants was linked to their seeking behaviour, girls are more likely to seek academic help than boys. In this perspective local study, for example, Dawit (2008) showed that there is a significant difference between male and female students in academic help-seeking performance.

Contrary to the above findings, the present study shows no significant gender difference on students' academic help-seeking behaviour. In line with this study, Williams (2011) in his research findings, points out that there was no gender difference with regard to frequency of academic help-seeking behaviour. Similarly, Kabtamu (2009), in his research findings, explained that no statistically significant difference was obtained in academic help-seeking behaviour between male and female participants.

Furthermore, with regard to gender differences in psychological help-seeking behaviour, Nam et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on gender differences in attitudes towards seeking psychological help amongst college students. Their main finding revealed that female college students exhibit more favourable attitudes towards psychological help seeking. The finding of this study is in line with Nam et al.'s (2010) report that indicates female students' higher psychological help-seeking behaviour than their male counterparts. The probable explanation for this may be due to the fact that females reported lower emotional intelligence scores compared to their male counterparts and their lesser tendency to express their emotions.

In the same vein, research has consistently found that females and people with previous counselling experience show more favourable attitudes towards seeking help than males and people with no previous counselling experience. In this regard, Addis and Mahalik (2003) concluded that across ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds, males are less likely than females to seek help for physical and mental health problem. In line with this,

evidence indicates that help-seeking behaviour might be different from culture to culture or from place to place (Tien, 1997, cited in Kabtamu, 2009).

With regard to gender differences in academic achievement, there are argumentative findings. For instance, Ewumi (2012) reported a negative significant relationship between gender and students' academic achievement. Of course, there are also contrary findings, which stated that no significant difference between gender and academic achievement was observed (Farook, 2003; Naderi et al., 2009, cited in Tadesse, 2011).

The result of the current study indicated that there was no statistically significant gender difference in students' academic achievement. Consistent with the findings of Farook (2003) and Naderi et al. (2009) cited in Tadesse (2011), the result of the present study revealed no statistically significant academic achievement difference between male and female college students, even though male students scored higher on academic achievement ($M=2.6007$, $SD=0.3398$) than their female counterparts ($M=2.5419$, $SD=0.3028$). The probable explanation for the finding that there is no statistically significant difference in the academic achievement between female and male college students could be that, mostly in rural Ethiopian culture, societal as well as parental attitudes and expectations favour males' education over females' education. The assumption is that female students are kept busy doing home circumstance routine duties and do not have time to do their academic activities which might have affected the academic achievement of male students positively while it affected the academic achievement of female students negatively. However, at this level of education (college education), since female students are living away from their parents, they do not devote much of their time to doing home circumstance tasks. Rather, their study hours are equal to their male counterparts' which enables them to perform effectively in academic endeavours.

Conclusions

In conclusion, in this study emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour are significantly and positively correlated with the WCTE first-year diploma students' academic achievement. The multiple regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour positively and significantly predict the students' academic achievement. The independent *t*-test analysis results indicated that there exist statistically significant differences on students' emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour based on gender. In this regard, male students were found to have higher emotional intelligence than female students and female students were found to be more psychological help seekers than male students. In contrast, there were no significant gender differences on students' academic help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement.

In general, this study clearly shows that emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, and psychological help-seeking behaviour variables are related to WCTE first-year college students' academic achievement. Thus, we have to find ways to foster the students' emotional intelligence, academic help-seeking behaviour, as well as psychological help-seeking behaviour in the interests of better academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and the conclusions drawn, the following points are implied to be taken into account by line stakeholders:

1. The college should:
 - prepare intensive orientation material about the importance of seeking academic and psychological help by initiating contact with professionals and present academic support when they first come to the college; and
 - emphasise social life, academic activities and adaptation mechanisms to the new environment by addressing problems of cultural norms and gender differences.
2. The college instructors ought to:
 - create smooth and friendly relationships with their students, and let the students know that the instructors are usually open and helpful;
 - give emphasis in the classroom and throughout the whole teaching and learning process to promoting emotional intelligence and academic help-seeking behaviour amongst the students; and
 - design lessons in a way that appeals to students' emotional needs and enhances emotional abilities.

The reason for this is that even if they are academically successful but lack these skills, they may not be productive, especially in the areas of dealing with the emotional, social and behavioural issues of human beings.

Additionally, the ability to integrate emotional information into cognitive activities is essential to effective functioning across the entire course of the students' lives.
3. On their part, the students have to:
 - develop the habit of asking for academic and psychological help/advisory and counselling services from their parents, teachers and counsellors; and
 - create friendly relationships with their parents and teachers so as to develop their emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviours for their academic success as well as social relationships.
4. All bodies concerned, such as family, school community and community-based organisations should:
 - avoid imposing any cultural practices that could promote gender differences of emotional intelligence and help seeking behaviours;
 - play a greater role to prepare the students for high emotional intelligence through rewarding them and giving them recognition for their improved emotional intelligence within the family, the school environment and the community they live in; and
 - consider academic help-seeking behaviour and psychological help-seeking behaviour to prepare the students to contribute significantly to social capital and community services. Accordingly, attention should be given to the

emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviours of college students rather than focusing only on their cognitive intelligence because these behaviours will be of vital importance in their professional services to the community.

Overall, the researcher would like to recommend that parents, instructors, counsellors and the college administrative bodies work on promoting students' emotional intelligence and help-seeking behaviours to enhance academic achievement of students in the WCTE. In addition, since the study was conducted in a limited area, it is more important to conduct a similar study that would represent a larger population of college students. In fact, it would be advisable for educators, curriculum designers, counsellors, etc., to focus not only on cognitive factors, but also on non-cognitive factors such as emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour etc. in the teaching and learning process.

In summary, these findings have offered insight into the correlations between students' emotional intelligence, help-seeking behaviours and their academic achievement. Future research will also be needed to clarify the causes of gender differences between students' emotional intelligence and psychological help-seeking behaviour variables.

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